



SEATTLE MUNICIPAL COURT

Update On Key Initiatives

Seattle City Council Briefings
September 3, 2013
9:30 a.m.

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Key Initiatives

1. Criminal Justice Roundtable
2. Technology Initiatives
 - a. Video Proceedings
 - b. Electronic Court Records
3. Seattle Youth Traffic Court
4. Community Court
5. New Legislation
6. Future Initiatives



Seattle Municipal Court

Mission:

The Seattle Municipal Court provides a forum to resolve alleged violations of the law in a respectful, independent and impartial manner.

Facts:

- Highest Volume Limited Jurisdiction Court in Washington State
- 7 elected Judges and 5.5 appointed Magistrates
- Adjudicates misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor crimes, infractions, & civil violations authorized under SMC & certain RCWs
- Over 8,500 criminal case filings/year with over 47,500 hearings
- Over 47,000 infraction hearings for traffic and non-traffic violations/year
- Over 667,000 infractions for parking, red light traffic camera and school zone camera violations/year
- Over 13,500 post-disposition probation hearings





Criminal Justice Roundtable

Over the last several months, the Criminal Justice Core Team led by the Municipal Court and including representatives of the Mayor's Office; the City Council; the Police Department; the City Prosecutor's Office; and two of the associations of Public Defense Attorneys have worked to create the first integrated data narrative to better understand work flow as people are connected to and move through the Criminal Justice System.

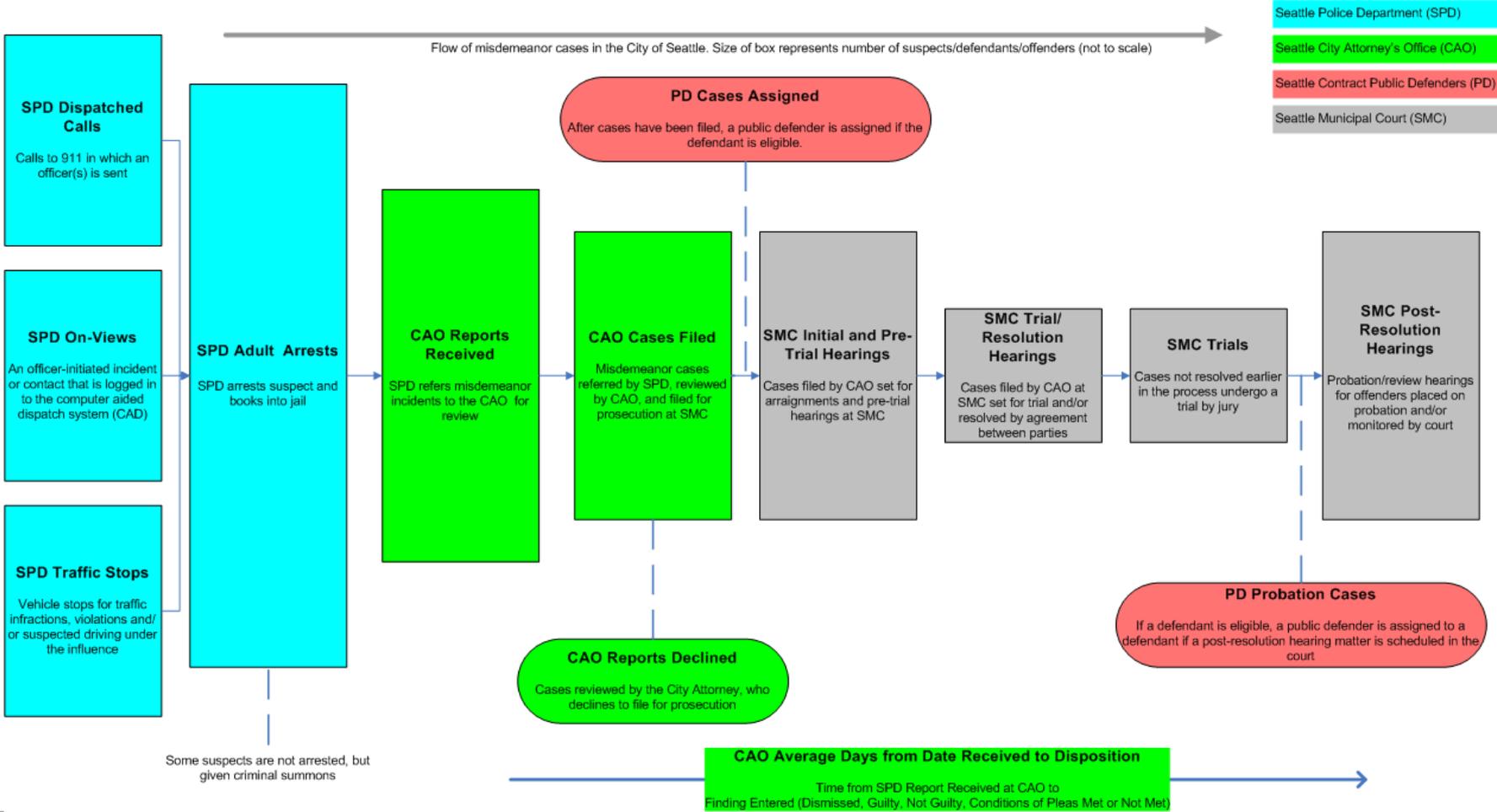
Discussion topics include:

- Enhancements to the handling of DV cases.
- Discovery for court cases.
 - Decrease timelines for providing 911 CDs or dash-cam DVRs to prosecution and defense.
- System-wide workload measures.



Criminal Justice Roundtable

Misdemeanor Criminal Process in the City of Seattle





Criminal Justice Roundtable – Data Story

1. More DUI and DV cases, which are complex, moving through the system. Likely to have more evidence/discovery items to be processed and reviewed.
2. Although workloads in terms of cases for both prosecutor and defense may be down – the workload in terms of motions, continuances, hearings has not decreased for these complex cases.
3. Public Defense attorneys continue to be assigned the same number of cases even though a greater percentage of their workload are these complex cases.
4. Discovery is critical and increasing the amount of digital evidence available does not necessarily mean that all of the data can be easily or quickly accessed. For example, processing 911 calls as evidence for DV charges competes with processing 911 calls for all felonies and for all public information requests.



Technology Initiatives

SMC actively embraces the utilization of technology in the business of the Court. The Court is undertaking several strategic technology initiatives that will impact the Court and its stakeholders. These initiatives will:

- Ensure that the use of technologies will protect and advance the fundamental right of equal access to justice;
- Reduce barriers to the Court and improve the Court environment;
- Ensure efficient utilization of judicial resources including improved use of shared/flexible caseloads while saving time and money;
- Deliver enhanced and timely service to the public;
- Increase accessibility to Court records.



Video Proceedings

On July 8, 2013, Seattle Municipal Court began a pilot project utilizing video proceedings for in custody arraignments in King County Jail Court Room 2 (KCJ2) and Seattle Justice Center Court Room 1003.

Benefits include:

- Efficient utilization of judicial resources;
- Provides preliminary support to the Court's Electronic Criminal Court Records and Forms initiative by familiarizing Court staff and stakeholders with electronic forms and records and their management;
- Possible expansion in other areas that may benefit from video proceedings such as competency determinations where the expert witness is at another facility (e.g. Western State).



Electronic Case Files

The Court is currently in the development stage of moving all criminal court records and courtrooms to an electronic system.

- ✓ Includes electronic forms, case files and discovery module.
- ✓ All files managed in an electronic document management system.
- ✓ Judges will use an electronic dashboard while presiding over cases.

Currently utilizing electronic case files for all infraction/citation hearings.

- ✓ Magistrate Operations and Courtroom 301 handle electronic citations.
- ✓ Individuals electronically check-in for hearings.
- ✓ Magistrates input case information direct to electronic Court record.



Seattle Youth Traffic Court

Launched in 2012 as a collaboration between Seattle Municipal Court, Seattle University School of Law and Garfield High School, this is the first Youth Court to be offered in Seattle.

Program Elements:

- Youth **under 18** without prior traffic violations are **sentenced by their peers** using creative sentencing.
- Garfield High School students are trained by Seattle University Law students to conduct hearings.
- Youth **serve as Judge, Prosecutor, Defense Attorney and Jurors.**
- Youth completing their sentences will have their **tickets dismissed**, and no report will be made to DOL.
- **Sanctions** may involve **community service, youth court jury service, preventative education** and letters of apology to victims.
- **Over 60 youth participated** in the first year.
- Future expansion of the educational component with SPD to include a traffic safety program.





Community Court

- Established March 2005 as joint effort between Court, City Attorney and Associated Counsel for the Accused (ACA).
- Accountability for repeat low-level criminal offenders to the Court and Community.
- Mandates Community Service assignments & requirements to make linkages to housing, chemical dependency treatment, mental health, educational and employment services.
- Program being evaluated and redesigned to meet recidivism and efficiency goals.



Community Court

Proposed enhancements include:

- Expanding the type of crimes that are accepted;
- Increase community partnerships (e.g. Seattle Community College and Seattle Vocational Institute);
- Offer additional educational opportunities within Probation (e.g. treatment readiness program);
- Adding a Community Service Crew Chief to increase community service options throughout the City.





New Legislation Impacting SMC

E2SSB 5912: Driving Under the Influence

- Mandatory arrest without a warrant for someone who has violated DUI laws and has a prior DUI offense within the past ten years.
- New release requirement for those charged with DUI or Physical Control where the defendant has a prior offense. Requires a functioning ignition interlock device (IID) installed with proof of installation filed with the Court within five business days.



New Legislation Impacting SMC

E2SSB 5912: Driving Under the Influence – continued

- Requires WASPC to establish a pilot project for a 24/7 sobriety program in which participant submits to blood, breath, urine or other bodily substance testing 24-hour seven-days-a-week.
- Mandatory sentencing related conditions for defendants with prior offenses, when a child passenger under 16 is in the vehicle or the driver was driving the wrong way on a multiple lane highway with a posted speed of 45 mph or greater.
- Allows municipalities to setup and operate DUI courts.



New Legislation Impacting SMC

ESSB 5095: Providing Proof of Financial Responsibility for Motor Vehicle Operation

- Insurance companies may provide policyholders with a card in either paper or electronic format including images displayed on a cellular phone or any type of portable electronic device.
- Law enforcement officers may only view the proof of insurance and are restricted from viewing other content on the portable electronic device.
- When a person gives the portable electronic device to an officer for proof of insurance, the person assumes all liability for any damage to the device.
- May impact evidence for Court proceedings.



Future Initiatives

1. Assessing impacts to Court of DUI legislation.
2. System upgrades and MCIS replacement.



QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS